

To Trust or Not to Trust

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/55534303) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/55534303>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Hannibal Lecter , Will Graham , Alana Bloom , Jack Crawford , Original Characters
Additional Tags:	Non-Traditional Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics , Will Graham Needs a Hug , Will Graham Has Issues , Asexual Will Graham , Hannibal Lector respects omegas , Hannibal Lecter is a Cannibal , Animal Instincts , Jealous Alana Bloom , Alana Bloom is an ass , Jack Crawford Being an Asshole , Alpha Hannibal Lecter , Alpha Jack Crawford , Alpha Alana Bloom , Omega Will Graham , Will Graham Needs A Break , Health Issues , first murder together
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2024-04-28 Completed: 2024-06-30 Words: 22,975 Chapters: 11/11

To Trust or Not to Trust

by [jenn008](#)

Summary

Will Graham is not a typical omega, but suddenly, for health reasons, he needs an Alpha. What will Will do when he knows he can not trust Alphas?

Notes

Should I post the last chapter today as well? Descions Descions...

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter 1

Will Graham knew that he was not a typical Omega but he wished that people would stop pointing it out to him, like Alana was doing now, “Will, it's unhealthy to go this long between heats.”

He fidgeted slightly with the frames of his glasses as he said, “I’ve had my heats.”

She was already shaking her head in disgruntlement. “You have not taken more than a day or two off since you started the FBI. There is no way that a week-long heat could have been had in that time frame.

He sighed as he said, “My heats are different.” He refused to explain why they were different, as she, like everyone else, would not believe him. They would try and convince him to do it the way that society told them that it should be done. He was not interested in that though, and no one would convince him otherwise, not Alana, not HR. No one. He was a grown-ass man and his opinion would be respected and not run over like it did not matter.

Alana frowned at him, “They're not that different, that you would never need to take time off. I am going to recommend that the agency put you on leave until your heats stabilize.”

Will fought the urge to roll his eyes, as he said, “Won’t stick. Already talked to the medical officer, and they have cleared my health.”

Alana snorted and said, “Well, you are not exactly the picture of health, are you?” Will checked the state of his body at that moment. He felt no pain anywhere, though he was a bit stiff. He checked his mind, and there was no broken, cracked wood in his forts. His mind was clear, and he was doing well at the moment.

He responded honestly, “I feel pretty good right now.” He felt relaxed like he was in control at the moment. The feeling was slowly fading away the longer he argued with Alana. Why did Alphas always assume they knew better than him? He knew his own body, what it needed to function well, and how often he needed to complete certain tasks to keep this health going.

He had experimented quite a bit during college, finding those limits for himself so others would not walk all over him with their assumptions like Alana was attempting to do. He would not give in to her, similarly to how he never gave into the knot heads of his youth, who were looking for a roll in the hay and refused to take no for an answer.

Alana ran her eyes over him, seeming to be looking for any possible imperfection. He was surprised to see the light blush on her face and wondered if she was looking to make sure he had regular heats so that she could be a part of it. That would never happen, and she would realize it if she actually listened to him instead of talking over him. She refused to take anything he said seriously, as if he was lesser than her due to his status as an Omega and his empathy disorder. He liked being able to read people so well, as it allowed him to judge the motives of being a part of his life. Everyone always wanted something from him, and Alana was not even the first, just the most recent in a long line of such people.

He did not understand why people seemed to think that he was controllable. If anything, he considered himself a wildcard, never quite doing things the way society thought that he should. He had confounded doctors his whole life, and it was not just his mind that got attention but the way he dealt with his presentation as well. Luckily, he had won the argument against having any scientific articles written about it, in return for allowing a few tidbits to slip out about his mind.

Nothing identifying but there were some intriguing theories that came about because of it so he could not find it in himself to truly mind, as those Doctors seemed like actually good people unlike most of the ones that he dealt with. He had been glad when they had decided to work with the FBI and was sad that he had not been able to work with them more often.

Most of his time was monopolized by Jack, to his displeasure. Jack was his least favorite team lead to work with if he was being honest with himself, always trying to push the limits that he put into place for his own health. He held strong though, not bowing to the Alpha.

Alana finally spoke, shaking him out of his thoughts, "If you are okay, then why do you look so shabby?" Her voice said that he was not going to get out of it, but he would, he always did when an Alpha confronted him. He looked down at his loosely fitting khaki pants from losing weight recently, from newly appearing food issues.

Most things just seemed unappealing these days but he would find a new food sure enough and put back on any needed weight. He was wearing a red plaid shirt with a brown sweater pulled over it. They were slightly worn but both of them felt soft against his skin and felt good when he rubbed it between his fingers as well, calming his anxiety. The outfit was finished with a pair of brown dress shoes that were freshly polished. He did not see anything wrong with his clothing choice.

He simply shrugged as he replied, "What's wrong with my clothes? They are professional and comfortable." He would easily admit to missing some of society's cues but he found no problem with that. He had no interest in learning what celebrities were supposed to be dating each other and who was cheating on whom. In fact, it bored him so he only looked into it if it impacted his work in some way, which was becoming more and more common.

If he had one more serial killer imitate the work of a movie, thus forcing him to watch said cringy movie, he would become a serial killer just to take them out. He did suppose that Buster appreciated the popcorn, followed by Max as a close second. The other dogs were more patient when waiting their turn, all of them knowing that begging would not get them the treat quicker.

Alana seemed almost taken aback by his words, and it thus slowed down her reply. It took her a moment to gather her thoughts before she finally spoke once more, "Comfort isn't everything. You need to dress like you are in charge."

He fought the urge to laugh as he said, "I have no problem keeping control in the classroom. In fact, they listen eagerly to my every word." He had told them what he expected at the beginning of every semester and they quickly learned that he meant what he said. Questions would be sent to a discussion forum that he would answer only after class if it was not answered in the remaining parts of his lecture.

He would simply quote slides if that was the case. He would have writing assignments that made them think out of the box, and though they would struggle at times, they came out of it thinking in different ways, which helped them catch those who were previously thought uncatchable. It filled him with pride to see what they were accomplishing and he had a clipping book filled with those names that he recognized.

Alana frowned at that once more, as if she was not believing a word out of his mouth. If she could not do it, then there was no way he could do it, or at least that was what he read on her face. He fought the urge to roll his eyes, as no matter what she thought, he was not a fragile, nearly broken teacup. He was whole, healthy, and in control of his life, all aspects of it. He had even been to his Doctor recently and had gotten a clean bill of health. He had been with this Doctor for most of his adult life, ever since he moved to this area.

He had thought about becoming a cop in Louisiana, but the cops had been unwilling to hire an Omega, the prejudices still running strong in the south. So, rerouted, and decided to get a Doctorate in entomology, and take some psychology classes while he was at it to supplement what he could do naturally. It was a tough course load and he was always looked down on for the fact that he was an Omega, held at a seemingly impossible standard, but he had been able to achieve the degree on time, and had been recruited to the FBI.

He had calmly told them that he was not interested in field work but instead, he was more interested in doing lab work and teaching. He was always called in to consult on bug-based evidence brought to the lab, and that is how they found out about his mind. He was a little bit too good at putting things together, and thus caught the attention of the higher-ups, leading to his current situation.

He had been looking at a particularly interesting maggot when Jack had stormed into his lab, yelling about missing boys and needing his help right this very minute. He had carefully closed the petri dish with the maggot before staring at the man, and asking him what he was talking about. He was working on the Dickenson case for the next hour, and then he had two classes to teach after that.

He did not have time for any other work at the moment, as after this he had to go home to his dogs: those that he adopted and those that he fostered. He missed them when they left but he really only wanted six or seven permanent animals at a time, but he liked the challenge of helping them while they were there.

Jack then tried to drag him out of his lab space, but he had snapped, saying that he did not go into the field and that he could fill out the form to work with him that everyone else did and he would get to the case when he had time. The man had tried to insist but he had simply pressed the panic button that his FBI superiors made him have despite his protests that he had not needed the button. He was relieved that he had it now as the man was escorted out of the room.

A few days later, he got his first form from the man and thus started the badgering. He had just ignored him, putting on headphones to drown out the yelling, and focusing on the things in front of him. Alana had come a few days later, seeming to think he was too delicate for this work, seemingly trying to control every aspect of his life and not achieving her goal at all, despite what she seemed to think.

Alana finally stormed off to his relief and seemed to be heading off in the direction of the chief medical officer like she had threatened. She would get nowhere, the most that would occur is a review, and even then he would work while it occurred. He would be fine, and even if the Alphas did not believe that his type of heat was possible, they would definitely not believe what was occurring now.

He had mentioned that his heats were different but had not stated how. All his heats did was make him long for more contact with people and animals that he trusted but he had no urge for sex. In fact, his scent often did not change, though he may attract Alphas occasionally, but it was just his natural scent, nothing special about this time of the month. Most would not realize that he was in heat at that very moment, but he knew, as all he had wanted to do for the last few days was cuddle his dogs and nest, but that was not possible now as he had things to do and responsibilities to keep. He could take care of himself after all. He did not need an Alpha.

Chapter 2

He was lecturing his students on one of the first crime scenes that he worked at the FBI: the murder of Theresa Marlow. Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed Jack hovering in the doorway impatiently. He knew that all the man wanted to do was interrupt the lecture but that would just cause him to move his request to the bottom of the stack. He knew Jack must have submitted the form while he was teaching, and he would speak to him once he was done.

He calmly made his last comment and assigned the students each an essay, much to their chagrin. He found it funny that students of all ages had the same expression whether they were 18 or 40. They would not protest though, or he would lengthen the assignment. There were still rumors going around about the time he sent students home with a 20-page essay after they protested about the 5-pager that was previously assigned. He had told them if they had not stopped protesting, he would make it longer for each comment he heard, and so he did, leading to 20 pages.

He spoke softly to one of his students, who wished to clarify a grade on a previous assignment. Normally, he would have them wait and come see him during office hours so the discussion would be private, but he always loved seeing Jack squirm while waiting. He sent the student off, watching as they joined their friend and left the room.

It was only then that Jack stepped into the room as he was packing his things into his bag, wanting to go back to his office to eat some lunch before working but he had a feeling that would not be happening. It was a shame as he had brought what he called mess with him: box mac and cheese, sausage, and broccoli. It was typically a safe food but he was having trouble with even that these days.

He turned to Jack, who was looking at him impatiently. He was not a robot, he had responsibilities outside of helping Jack. He refused to get tangled up in the minds that he looked into, not wanting to lose himself. He smiled placidly at Jack, waiting for him to speak to him. He would not be the one to initiate the conversation, knowing that Jack would take it as an agreement to his terms even if he had not even looked into the case yet and decided whether or not to take it.

Jack spoke confidently, as if he knew exactly what the answer was before he spoke, "You have a teaching post yet I was under the impression that it's difficult for you to be social."

He replied calmly, as if he was speaking to a student who had come to office hours rather than an FBI agent, "I can be social when I choose to. I just often choose not to be."

Jack frowned, as if that reply did not fit on the script that he had created, as he spoke disappointedly, "Well you'll never find an Alpha that way."

He blinked at Jack, wondering where that sort of comment had come from. Jack had never struck him as the type to hold such prejudices but something told him that this was all a trap. He could not help but speak honestly as he said, "I am not interested in finding an Alpha. I am content with my life as it is."

Jack, seemed to be trying to hide how upset he was feeling, as he replied, “Not even if that would allow you to work in the field.”

He sighed, seeing where this was going now, “Jack, for the fiftieth time, I am not interested in going into the field, Alpha or no Alpha.”

Jack seemed a bit more upset now as he spoke with growing anger, “Think of all the good you could do with a fresh scene. You are being selfish.”

He was already shaking his head in disagreement as he replied, “Jack, I am not interested in going that deep. By limiting it, I can protect my mind, and not be taken over by what I see. By setting healthy limits for myself, I can keep helping people. I will not allow you to manipulate me into throwing away all by carefully curated limits. Now excuse me, there is work to be done.” He walked out the door of the classroom, bag slung over his shoulder. He made his way to his office, needing to check his emails before making his way into the lab.

There was a test that he needed to start this evening so that he would be able to analyze the sample the following morning. He sometimes wished that the tests took less time than they did but then they would be less accurate, thus allowing the defense to pick holes in them. He always shook his head when the new scientists would protest and went into his reasoning until they finally agreed with him, or just wanted him to shut up.

It was fifty-fifty what the outcome would be and it honestly depended on the person, and how set in their ways that they were. His cases had a high closure rate, as he always ensured that the evidence was neatly in place and cataloged so they could go through it methodically in court, whether or not they called him to the stand.

People, no matter what they claimed, were prejudiced against Omegas. Most of them did not think that he had earned the degree he had gotten without sleeping with someone to get to the top. It was wrong but it often led to people not believing him in court. He had no idea why everyone insisted on sharing their gender, as all it did was set people up to fail. He often had an assistant shadow him that was a Beta, who then did all the testimony.

That was fine in his book, as he never enjoyed testifying, and the stupid questions he would have to answer, leading to being called a liar until he processed his medical paperwork but even there were still the doubters.

He ate a few bites of food, knowing that he needed something in his stomach, staring at the file that Jack had given him. Despite what he said earlier, he was thinking about opening it, but he pushed the feeling away, deciding to give it his full attention later, he had work that needed to be done. He packed up his things and slipped them into his bag. He walked to the lab, scanned his ID, and entered a code. He opened one of the lockers next to the lab and stowed his bag, then entered the lab.

He pulled on his lab coat and gloves, and then got to work, carefully measuring out the chemicals that he would need. He made a note of the ones that were running low so that he could requisition them. He then methodically went through the tests, carefully marking down each of the results, which were then compared to what his assistant put down as well. He was

relieved that they agreed and more testing was not needed to prove one of them right or wrong.

He carefully sanitized his space and made his way over to the desk to quickly write up the report. If he did it now while it was fresh, it would take less time than if he waited for the next day. He knew that from experience and wanted to get the paperwork done as quickly as possible. He was unsure why so many forms seemed to ask the same questions but filled them out anyway, knowing better than to skip them. They all had their reasons, as dumb as they may seem to him.

He knew his dogs would be okay, as they all had collars that would allow them to enter and leave the house through the doggie door, and not allow them more than 200 feet from the house, and their food canisters filled automatically, with a dry food recipe that he made from scratch. It was a lot more healthy than anything that could be bought from the store, and tasted better too.

Occasionally, he'd make them a hot meal, but that was only for special occasions, a treat for them all. He then would bathe them one by one, lathering them all in love until they were all cleaned and brushed, curled up in their bed, a pile of goo.

He smiled as the reports were finished off, and he could finally leave for the day. If he was being honest, he felt very achy, like he had exercised very hard rather than doing lab work. He sighed, stretching out, and trying to get his mind on the drive home. He noticed that his hands were shaking, and tried to still them, knowing it was no good to show weakness here. He wished that he could have a friend to call in situations like this, but there was no one that he could trust.

They were all looking for him to fail, waiting to tell him, "I told you so". He would not prove them right, he couldn't as he had sacrificed too much to get to this moment.

He finally opened the door to his car, threw his bag into the passenger seat, and placed his head in his hands, fighting back tears as the world started to spin. He was tired, so tired but there was nothing he could do about that at the moment. He had so much work that he needed to do, but if he started the car and drove home, he could heat up whatever sounded good, eat it while standing over his sink, collapse in a pile of dogs, and sleep until morning.

There was nothing urgent that needed to be done that night, at least he hoped that was the case. He removed his hands from his face, and ran them through his hair, hoping it would center him. It did not do much but he was finally able to bring himself to start the car.

He felt like he was being poked with nails the whole way home, and was relieved when he finally drove onto his property, barely able to function. He grabbed his bag from the car seat and greeted the dogs who had come outside to see him. He spent a moment petting them before breaking away from the crowd and heading inside.

He carefully removed his mostly untouched lunch and threw it into the fridge. He will decide what to do with it tomorrow. He looked through the fridge, hoping that something would appeal to him, and luckily an apple with peanut butter and cheese slices sounded amazing.

He cut the apples and dipped them into large globs of peanut butter, eating a few pieces of cheese every few bites of apples. By the time he finished, he felt a bit more human, though the aches had not gone away. In fact, they felt worse than before, as if someone was trying to stab him from the inside out. He would just make his way to bed, and call a Doctor in the morning if things felt worse than now. He knew better than to play around with his health, as he always seemed to get the worst end of the stick, getting the severe form of the disease from ignoring it.

He curled up in bed, trying to catalog his body, to see where the pain was coming from. It seemed to be radiating from his midsection, and then it hit him. It was probably cramping from his heat. He was not prone to it, with his odd form of heat but it was known to occur from time to time, when his body was mad at him for some reason. He fell asleep feeling at peace, having figured out the problem, having no idea what was coming his way next.

Chapter 3

He woke up feeling even worse than before and knew before he even removed himself from his bed that he would be calling off of work. He knew that it would no doubt piss off the people like Jack but he had many “Omega Days” where he could call off work for no reason. Most used them for heats but they could be used for anything. He commonly used them when he was feeling unwell, and today was definitely a day that he could not make his way into the office safely, let alone focus enough to do work. He calmly made the call to the on-campus Doctor, who would alert the correct people that he would not be in that day. The Doctor never looked down on him for his gender when doing his yearly physical, and so he knew the man would be fair when alerting the correct people.

He debated just curling up in bed and sleeping the day away but he knew that there were some chores he could do around the house that would not take much effort on his part. He carefully swept and vacuumed the house, getting rid of the dog hair that was hanging around. He then dusted in the corners and almost dropped the duster when he realized that he was nesting, wanting his home to be perfect. He wondered why this heat was being full of surprises but found he did not mind as he felt no hint of horniness.

Other Omegas that he knew spoke fondly of being horny while cleaning and it was a traditional sign of their approaching heat. He was interested in the fact that it was in the middle of his heat instead. He shrugged and made note of everything that he was experiencing in a notebook, not even registering the fact that he had not eaten a single thing yet.

He noticed that his hands were shaking again and sighed, knowing that meant that he was neglecting eating once more. Food sounded horrible and in fact, the thought of it made him want to throw up what little remained of his small dinner the night before. He shrugged and saw the fresh vegetables and fruit juice in the fridge and used it to make a smoothie. He was able to sip at it slowly, and it seemed willing to stay down, much to his relief. He frowned when his hands did not stop shaking even with the nutrients that he was giving his body.

He sighed and bit the bullet, finally making a call to his Doctor. The Doctor agreed to come out and see him, in order to evaluate the symptoms that he was experiencing. They both agreed that if something about his heats were changing, it was better for him not to go to the clinic and potentially drive an unmated Alpha into rut. That was the last thing that the clinic needed, an injured Alpha in rut. It was better that the Doctor came to see him, where he was in control of the environment, and had lots of overprotective dogs to keep him safe if anyone tried anything towards him.

He knew how to protect himself but it was easy for Doctors to get the upper hand if they wanted to. Their oath to do no harm had never stopped them in the past. He shook his head, trying to clear those thoughts from his mind, knowing that they would not take him anywhere good, and he did not have the time to be caught in a flashback, especially with people coming into his territory.

He was sitting on the front step when the car pulled out and relaxed at the familiar face of his Doctor, who had never made an unwanted move towards him. The Doctor stepped out of his car, and stopped a short distance away, allowing him to get used to his presence before stepping closer. Soon, the Doctor was sitting a short distance away from him on the step, which made him relax. Nothing was changing because they were not in a public place. He still kept half an eye on him, but his anxiety was lowered to a much more manageable level, rather than feeling like there were 1000 ants crawling under his skin.

The Doctor spoke softly, seemingly wanting to put him at ease, “Your heat scent is still the same, that is a good sign. Besides a hint of distress and pain, there is nothing unexpected for your presentation.” The Doctor held out his hand patiently, waiting for him to be ready to reach out in turn. He reached out shakily until his hand found that of the Doctor. The Doctor did not grip his hand, instead just placing two fingers to check his pulse. Whatever he found did not seem to make him happy.

The Doctor poked and prodded his shaking hand as if looking for signs of damage but nothing he did caused him any pain. If anything, it felt a bit like he was getting a hand massage, and he fought the urge to lean into the touch. As if the Doctor could read his mind, he frowned and seemed to study him closer. He fought the urge to fidget under the intelligent blue eyes that were looking critically over his body. He felt like it was coming from a place of concern rather than a controlling place when Alana had done it previously.

The Doctor spoke once more, and said, “How is your appetite?”

He replied honestly, not feeling the need to hide here, “Not good. Very little is appealing, and the thought of food makes me feel sick at the moment.”

The Doctor nodded as if this did not surprise him as he replied, “Yes, you do look like you lost some weight that was needed to make you healthy. You look like a swift breeze could knock you over.”

He laughed harshly as he responded, “And at times, I certainly feel that way. The feeling comes and goes though, luckily.” He did not feel like crap constantly, mostly just at the end of the day. Last night and today had been particularly bad. Nothing he did seemed to change the symptoms so he reached out for a second opinion. There was something wrong, and he wanted to see if there was a way to fix it easily or if it needed to be a long-term plan of action.

The Doctor looked thoughtful, and said, “Any other weird things you have experienced recently besides the cramping, shaking, lack of hunger, and tiredness?”

He was silent for a long moment, thinking back to the last few days but nothing else stood out in his mind. He just shook his head, unable to find the words suddenly. It felt like the Doctor was further away, and the world seemed to spin for a long moment. It took several long blinks to get the world to return to its normal state and stop taking him for a trip. His Doctor said something, but his ears had started to ring at that moment. He swallowed harshly, and finally, his ears popped allowing the sound to filter back into his perception.

The Doctor looked concerned, and finally said, "All the symptoms point to one thing and I don't think you will be happy with the answers I am about to give you." He frowned, wondering what could be so bad that the Doctor would give him a warning. The Doctor was normally a fairly straightforward guy, who told him how it was. He did not give warning, but just informed him of the answer to his problems, whether he wanted to know it or not.

"You're making me anxious, Doctor," he admitted quietly, not wanting to put his fears into the open air as if it would make them more true than before.

The Doctor blinked, as if that was not what he expected to hear from him, and said, "Well, I'll stop beating around the bush then. Your body is craving the presence of an Alpha. Before you start protesting, this is in no way sexual, but your body craves a pheromone that only an Alpha can give you. It is not uncommon in men your age that choose not to bond with Alphas, and there are several options to help with this issue."

He frowned, not wanting to be forced to let an Alpha in his life, someone who would no doubt try and control him. He enjoyed things the way they were, being able to come and go with the breeze, taking care of his dogs, fishing, and just working to support his lifestyle. He did not want to have to integrate someone else in that situation, and he was beyond glad that it was not sexual. He was sex-repulsed, and the thought of having to have sexual contact made him want to throw up. He was relieved that there were other ways as well and that it was supposedly an easy fix.

He took a deep breath, trying to wipe the frown off of his face but failing as he said, "Okay, what are my choices?"

The Doctor looked sympathetic as he said, "Option 1 is bonding with an Alpha. Option 2 is having an Alpha companion who you can exchange pheromones with on a regular basis but nothing permanent as a bond. Option 3 would normally be synthetic options but sadly you are allergic to one of the ingredients so it is a no-go. Option 4 is to leave things as they are and just treat the side effects, which may not be effective long term and lead to an emergency implementation of option 1 or option 2 in an effort to save your life."

He fought an urge to punch something. Why did he have to have that stupid allergy? It always seemed to prevent him from getting something that he needed for this Omega business. It would have made things so much easier when he was younger, but instead, all it had done was cause an allergic reaction, sending him into the arms of the person that caused his dislike of Doctors. He fought to keep his breathing even, as he did not want to have an anxiety attack, not at that moment at least. He could break down when he was alone later, and mourn what he had lost.

He sighed as he responded, "I am not comfortable with the idea of letting an Alpha into my life. It has never led to good things before. In fact, it always seemed to cause everything to go wrong from that moment onward." He realized that he was shaking, not wanting to think about being trapped in a relationship with someone else, unable to get out of it due to the control that the other party had over him. Alphas always seemed to be believed over Omegas, no matter who was actually being true. He did not want to become another statistic. He took a deep breath but it did nothing to calm his racing thoughts.

The Doctor was watching him concernedly but did not try to touch him once more in order to calm him down. Instead, he said, “There are several routes you can go down, with varying levels of checks and balances. Do you want me to explain it to you or just leave you the paperwork?”

It took him a large amount of time before he could force out the necessary words, “Please leave the information so I can look into it when I feel normal. What do I owe you?”

The Doctor just waved his hand as he said, “I’ll have the office bill you. You are in no shape to deal with it at this moment. Why don’t you go lay down and rest?” He nodded walked back into the house, and curled back up onto the bed. Sadly sleep did not come as his mind would not stop racing, trying to pull him in directions that he did not want to go in.

Chapter 4

It was much later in the evening when he could finally feel like he could look at the pile of information that he had been left with. He pulled himself from the safe confines of the bed and walked over to the kitchen table with trepidation. He did not want to look at the information, knowing it would make the situation more real.

He did not need an Alpha, but apparently, his body did in order to be healthy. He just knew this would not turn out well but what could he do about it? He could not afford to be sick for the foreseeable future, so he would move forward with the plan despite every instinct screaming at him not to.

The first packet of information was about a matching service, that was sort of like a dating website that matched Alpha and Omegas together. He immediately discarded it, as most of the Alphas on sources like that are looking for a quick romp in the hay, not a long-term platonic partnership, so that would not do. There was some sort of mixer event as well that looked somewhat promising, as he could at least look at each of the Alphas. A third option was similar to speed dating but both parties were blindfolded so they could not discriminate based on appearance or wealth but instead scent. They would start by eliminating using scent samples and only meet those who may be compatible. At the end of the night, they were offered the chance to meet anyone with anyone who had both parties show interest. Something about that option felt right, and he was relieved there was one the next afternoon that he could go to.

He calls out of work for the next day, admitting that he had an appointment the next day relating to his health that he could not miss. The on-campus Doctor sounded less understanding than the day before and he could practically hear the man rolling his eyes over the phone. There goes his respect for him. It was the first time in the many years that he had worked here that he needed to take two days off in a row and now he was suddenly getting flack?

He had seen many Alphas take off a week at a time and no one looked at it as out of the ordinary. He knew for a fact that they were not unwell like he was, but he got the disrespect. He hated the stereotype of Omega's weakness, and how much people bought into it despite seeing how knowledgeable he and other Omegas were.

He barely slept that night, only feeling trepidation for the next day. His mind kept fixating on worst-case scenarios, spinning all kinds of bad outcomes from a stalkerish Alpha to a controlling Alpha that confines him to a house and takes away his dogs, his pack. He knew that he would have to compromise, and probably stop fostering on top of having six dogs but he thought of all the good that he was doing and dreaded having to stop it. Many of the dogs he had fostered would have been killed otherwise and he can not bear the thought of any of them dying as he had not been there. He'd make it work, he always did.

He spent the morning with all the dogs, throwing them balls in the yard, and petting any dog that came up to him. He gave them all plenty of homemade treats and when he got into his

car late afternoon, they were all tucked out, several of them twitching or snoring in their sleep. It always filled him with a sense of wonder that they were all willing to trust him.

It was not always easy but it was always worth it in the end, to see many of them going to their forever homes, as he could not keep them all forever, no matter how much wanted to at times. He waved goodbye as he left, trying not to feel like this would be the last time that he saw many of them.

The center for these meetings was only a short distance away from where he lived, and less than 30 minutes later, he was looking up at the large, looming building. He stood there looking up, fighting the urge to run away and not go through with it. As if reminding him of the health issues that he was facing, his hands started to shake, and he just sighed, knowing that he had to go through with it, no matter how much he did not want to. He just wanted to drive away and go back to his life, but that was not an option sadly.

He finally approached the door and entered a room with a very loud air filter with four labeled doors: Alpha, Omega, Beta, and staff. He approached the door slowly, hesitant to open it but in the end, he took a step forward and opened the door. He stepped foot into what seemed to be a plush waiting room full of beanbags and plush chairs with a wide array of magazines that would entertain people with a wide variety of interests.

He was relieved that they were not all housekeeping magazines that normally got pushed his way whenever he had appointments. He walked to the check in desk and saw a perky, black-haired woman sitting behind the desk, engrossed in something on the computer. He could not help but wonder if it was work or some other website that people frequented for entertainment.

The woman looked up and smiled widely at him and said, "Hello, what brings you to our fine establishment today?"

He looked at her a bit shyly, trying to figure out how to word his request, and finally answered, "Matching for a companion Alpha."

The female Beta nodded, and said, "Platonic, Romantic, Sexual, or a combination of some of the above."

He blinked at her for a moment before replying confidently, "Definitely Platonic, don't mind romantic, not interested in sexual." The woman nodded and made a note on the sheet in front of her.

"Did you fill out the online form?" he nodded, bewildered by the fact that she had not asked sooner but figured that she liked to get a feel for those who were seeking a match. Some of those questions had been invasive but he did his best to answer honestly, wanting this to work and there not to be any adverse reactions to any of the events today. He had even been honest about some of his past traumas, which had always been hard for him to admit, but they caused some limits that could be important for this day.

"What name is the reservation under?" She asked fingers posed on the keyboard.

He spoke, trying to imbue confidence in his words but was unsure if he succeeded or not, “Will.”

Her face softened at those words and he immediately knew that she had read his file. He found that he did not care, as she looked like the type to make good cookies. He blinked at that thought, wondering where it had come from. There were no cookies here, so why was his thoughts going there?

Maybe she was thinking of it and he picked it up with his empathy? That could be the case, but he was unsure. Something about that thought rang untrue, as if part of that thought was missing. He did not press his thoughts though, not wanting to get a headache, as was prone to occur in situations like this, where he dug into his mind for the answer.

“Hello, Will, would you like me to explain the process today for you, and you can tell us anything that you would not be comfortable with?”

All he felt was a sense of relief as he said, “Yes, that would be great.”

She smiled as she started to explain, “Okay, so first you will look through a book of scents, to see if there is any that appeals to you. If you find some, we will send a request for a meet-up today. If not, you’ll be put on a waiting list to get called in once a week to check on any new scents of Alphas who have joined the program.”

“If the Alpha agrees to a meeting, they will be given a palette of scents, and if they don’t rule yours out, they will meet with you later. All meetings will be monitored until you are comfortable otherwise. You could meet here once a week for a year before deciding to have an outside meeting or jump into it a day from now. It depends on the duo.” He was happy that it seemed to be different from the pamphlet, that he would not have to meet Alphas blindfolded until he narrowed down their scent from the sounds of it.

He was relieved that she did not assume that he would form a relationship or be comfortable with a random Alpha. He tried to smile gratefully, but all that came out was a grimace, as he was still deeply worried about everything. It would be fine, it had to be fine. He had the clinic on his side, and he had a feeling that he would be protected, even if he did not feel like he needed it or deserved it. They knew the full story of his past and were still looking at him with caring and not like he was something that needed to be locked away like many had done in the past.

He took a deep breath before saying, “I understand. What information will the Alpha be given about me?” If he was being honest, he was worried about the Alpha tracking him down before he was ready for contact. He wanted to take things slow and test the water softly, but he was unsure what would actually happen if he was forced to obey the Alphas' whims. He would not obey, he couldn’t give in, or it felt like he would never return from the dark abyss of that part of his mind, the place that he never went willingly.

The Beta smiled, as she opened a door, and ushered him through, and said, “No information will be given besides your scent, as requested. However, we can request Alphas not to use other means to look for you but there is no guarantee that they will listen. If they show up at your home or place of work and you do not wish to interact with them, either call here and

we will send a team to get them, or call the cops, and explain how uncomfortable their stalking makes you. Play up your Omeganess, and they will take away the mean Alpha that is making you uncomfortable.”

The last part she said with a conspiratorial wink and he could not help but laugh. She was one of the only people who told him to use his Omega qualities to his advantage. He decided that he liked her, and did not mind talking with her. He shyly said, “What’s your name?”

She smiled at him in return and said, “I’m Jules, and feel free to reach out to me outside of our meetings at the center. I am your case agent after all.” He felt himself smiling a true smile at her, and suddenly he did not feel as nervous for the events that were coming. Jules would not allow any harm to come his way, and if something happened, she would be in his corner all the way.

It was the first time that he could remember that someone was willing to fight for him, and him as himself. Jules did not seem to want to change who he was but instead worked with him on how he was, faults and all. He was not perfect but she wanted to work with him to find happiness. Jules chatted to him, telling him more about different parts of the clinic and all the things that he could do while waiting to see if any of the Alphas that interested him would come. He was surprised by the wave of calm that passed through him, as he sat at a table in order to look through the book of scents.

Chapter 5

The scent book was not actually a book. Instead, it was a large pile of sealed containers, each holding a small swab of fabric that had been rubbed against an Alpha's scent gland. He was glad that all the scents would not be thrown at him all at once, and he could focus on each one. Alphas normally smelled rank, any scent was too overpowering to make him want to spend any time around. For example, Alana often smelled like she bathed in vanilla while Jack smelt like he had lost a battle in Italy, an overpowering mixture of tomato and herbs.

He picked up the first container, opened the lid, and practically threw it away from him, his instincts telling him to get away from it. He looked for a defensible area, and there happened to be a large bookshelf, with a small space above it. He threw himself in the direction, and climbed up the shelf easily, using the gaps in the books to reach the top, and curled on top, hoping that he was not seen, that the Alpha would not find him. He would be safe there, he had to be. He heard the voice of someone below but ignored it, covering his ears, and trying to block everything out. No one would be able to get to him up here, and if they did, he would be able to get away before anything happened.

He hissed as he saw some sort of gas release from the ceiling, and just stayed curled up, ignoring the way that his eyes fluttered. He would not fall asleep, as that is when the bad things occurred. He watched with slitted eyes as the woman in front of his hiding place seemed to get more and more concerned by his behavior. He did not care. He had learned well how to ignore what his body wanted and instead keep a watchful eye. He knew that if he tried to move, it would only make him more likely to give in the end, but if he stayed still, then he could stay partially awake, always watching, somewhere between asleep and awake.

He ignored the way that his head was starting to pound, instead pushing it to the corner of his mind to deal with later. Judging by the amount of times that he had to do it, it would be quite the migraine that he would have to deal with. It would be painful but at least he could keep his wits about him at the moment. He felt scattered as if something was trying to push its way to the forefront of his thoughts but he ignored it. He did not have the time to acknowledge it at the moment, afraid that losing his focus would lead to him sleeping, leaving him defenseless to any attacks that may occur.

His eyes drooped and he hissed with displeasure, trying to dispel the contaminated air from his lungs. It did not work, only made him feel slightly lightheaded due to his lack of breathing. He heard some sort of alarm and whimpered as he covered his head, the noise hurting his ears and making his pounding head come to the forefront.

Everything seemed to be too loud, and he closed his eyes, hoping it would smother the extraneous sensory input but nothing changed and his heart started to pound. He curled around his head tighter, wishing that the pain would stop. As suddenly as the noise started, it petered out quickly, leaving him in sudden silence.

He glanced around warily, head spinning in the silence. The silence was almost worse, at least he could hide in the noise even if it hurt him in the process. It was fine, he could take

the pain, even if there were still tears streaming down his head, his ears ringing, and to be honest, he felt a bit sick to his stomach. He wanted to go home and curl up in his nest, with all the dogs that could fit. They could watch out for him, and allow him to feel safe like he does not need to be on edge all the time. He felt his stomach roll, and fought the urge to lose whatever was in his stomach, having a feeling he would just feel worse if he did.

He closed his eyes and kept his ears alert. He could hear the sounds of measured footsteps approaching, and a quicker pair seeming to be jogging beside them as if they were attempting to fill the person in. He hoped that it was not an Alpha as he was unsure how he would react now. He did not want to be controlled, he just wanted to be free to be whoever he wanted to be.

He did not want to be told the correct way to act or other such bull shit that Alphas were always spouting to him when he did something that they disagreed with. He tried to hide the teeth that he was baring towards the door, ignoring the woman standing already in front of the shelf. If she was a true threat, she would have already made a move towards him rather than just hovering where she was.

The smooth footsteps stopped in the doorway and made no move to enter the room. He breathed in, trying to get a feel for who was waiting, outside the door. He was surprised by the fact that the scent seemed to be coming from an Alpha. Why were they not coming in, like he would expect a typical Alpha to but instead standing outside the door? Whoever was with them, pushed open the door, and obviously expected the person to enter. They did not, instead standing in the doorway where he could be seen but not be taken as a threat. This one was smart, they were worthy prey.

He shifted from his curled up position into a crouch, so that he could take in the person in front of him. They were on the older side but that did not take away from his inherent beauty. They had short hair that was a mixture of blonde and brown, neatly styled against their scalp. He was dressed in a suit that was neatly pressed, a light plaid present. His tie should have clashed with the outfit that he was wearing but somehow it brought it all together, making his maroon-brown eyes pop. Yes, he would be a good Alpha to take down. It would show that he was a worthy companion.

He knew this Alpha would be respectful, but at the same time, push his boundaries to see what would happen. Good, he wanted them to be polite, but he did not want to be overly comfortable, to be bored. He wanted action, he wanted spirited conversation but at the same time, he wanted quiet nights with the dogs or long fishing trips to clear his mind.

Maybe if he had a fine companion, he could stop the extra consulting that he was doing, and just switch to teaching, with only the occasional case. He was tired, oh so tired that all he wanted to do was sleep for the next year and then come back to reality.

The man's nostrils flared as if he was scenting him, and he found himself returning the favor. While he could smell the man, it was not pungent or overpowering. Instead, he was given the impression of a tasteful herb garden, one that someone could spend hours breathing in, but still find a new scent the next time that they visited. He tilted his head in consideration, wondering if he was imagining the undertone of blood that he was smelling. He breathed in again and knew then that he was not imagining it. It was there, and something about it sent

bells ringing in his mind as if it was trying to remind him of something. He shook his head gently, trying to shake the thought loose, curious of what he could be recalling but nothing fell loose.

The Alpha seemed to have made some sort of decision and they let out a curious, encouraging noise. He was silent for a moment, and finally let out a soft growl, basically telling him to approach at his own risk. He may or may not attack depending on his mood, and right now he was feeling particularly feisty and wanted to feel the blood under his fingernails or in his teeth. He was not feeling particularly picky at that moment so he would take whatever he could get his hands on.

The Alpha took but a single step forward, and toed off his pricey dress shoes, leaving him in a dark pair of dress socks that were removed in short order as well, leaving the Alpha barefooted. He then removed his neatly pressed suit jacket, and folded it, leaving it on the chair next to the door. The Alpha then rolled up his sleeves, showing his muscular forearms. He could appreciate the shape that the man was in, but there was no way that he would let him control him. Control over him was something of the past, not the present or future.

The Alpha then did something that he did not expect at all: he bared his neck. He could not help the whine that he let out at the sight. The Alpha was perfect. He jumped down from his hiding place and landed in a crouched position on the floor. He ignored the hands that tried to grab him, pushing past him to get to the Alpha who was standing in the middle of the room, and he stopped just out of touching distance, not trusting that this was more than a ruse to get him to be complacent. He wanted to reach out and stroke the neck that was offered oh so willingly to him, but he did not feel confident enough for that, as if it was something that he could look at but not touch.

The Alpha made an encouraging noise as if telling him that he could explore. He was still hesitant, not wanting to give him any leverage. It was not safe, as the Alpha could change his mind, and attack him at any opportunity. He knew that he could defend himself but Alphas were tricky buggers, especially when they had some sort of fighting skill, and he could tell that this Alpha had experience.

This Alpha knew violence and they were okay with the demons that it wrought. In fact, they welcomed it. He found that he did not mind that fact, as he lived in the realm of the demons as well. They may not be friends, but they coexisted peacefully for the most part.

He shifted slightly and bared his teeth at the Alpha once more, and the Alpha let out a pleased rumble in return. He could see that his stubbornness pleased the Alpha and he was unsure how he felt about it. Was it all a game to the Alpha? He leaned forward slightly, studying the Alpha intently once more.

He could tell immediately that the Alpha, while not quite impulsive, was prone to doing things to see how a person would react, in order to sate his own curiosity. It was an interesting way to view the world and the people in it, and he could not help but find it fascinating and wanted to know more.

He finally took the leap of faith, literally. He pounced on the Alpha, feeling no fear for once as he did so, nails digging into the Alpha's shoulders harshly. The Alpha just seemed to like

that, and cradled him closely, making no move to touch him further. He thought about getting down but he could feel his head clearing for the first time in a long time, and his anxiety returning.

He debated asking the Alpha to put him back down on his own two feet, but at that thought, his fingers dug more harshly into the Alpha as if daring anything to separate them. Huh, so he guessed he had chosen. That had certainly been easier than he thought it would be, but now came the real test: would he feel comfortable with the Alpha long-term?

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The clinic tried to separate him from his Alpha (he really needed to find out their name, but something in him preened every time he described the man as his Alpha). In the end, they were shuffled into a large room with a table, and what seemed to be some kind of area that one could build a safe space in. The blankets looked so soft, and he longed to go over to them and make a comfortable spot for the two of them to lounge together.

He was worried though, as he had the strangest feeling that if he got more than a few feet away from the Alpha, he would be snatched away from him, and whisked off to another room, and that was unacceptable. How was he supposed to decide if he liked this Alpha if they were separated?

The Alpha carefully placed him on his own two feet once more, and he reluctantly removed his fingers from the Alpha's back. He stared at the blood on his fingers, and he could not help but bring them to his mouth, and clean them off with his tongue. The Alpha watched him intently as if this was what he had hoped this was what would happen but had not wanted to bring it up for fear of pushing for too much too soon.

He could understand that way of thinking, having gone through it several times himself, always nervous about asking for what he wanted. He had learned to set boundaries through trial and error, and now he could keep his own against forces of nature like Jack and Alana. He had a feeling his Alpha was like that as well, but for some reason did not want to push him. It felt powerful, to be honest, to have special treatment from this Alpha, who he had the strangest feeling did not take idiots lightly.

He wanted to reach for the Alpha's hand, to pull him over to the soft area, and get to know him, to see if they would be compatible, but he couldn't. What kind of person would want to hold hands with someone who just licked their fingers clean of their blood? He was unsure if he wanted to, maybe if he trusted the person. As much as his gut said that his Alpha was trustworthy, he knew he could not trust his gut.

It had led him astray too many times to be fully trusted. His mind started to wander, toward the dark corner that lingered, even after all this time. Before he could do more than breach it, a hand appeared at the back of his neck and squeezed it. It snapped him out of his wandering thoughts and he breathed deeply for a long moment before finally feeling centered once more, though the anxiety was still building.

He blinked his eyes at the man and found himself smiling, surprising himself in the process as he said, "I am Will, and you are?" He figured it was only fair to learn more about the man that he wanted to get closer to. He was not sure if he trusted him yet, but he could feel the benefits of being near him, much to his displeasure. He hated the fact that his body needed this and wished he was not allergic to the artificial pheromones once more. He may have

found the man interesting, but interesting did not mean that he wanted to spend the rest of his life connected to him.

The Alpha smiled suavely, and replied, "I am Hannibal." He smiled at the Alpha, somehow knowing that his name was Hannibal made things better. It made him no longer a scary, faceless entity. It made something inside him settle, and he made a noise. He was unsure if this noise was good or bad, just that it came out of his mouth. It was a little high-pitched, but it removed a lot of the tension and anxiety in his chest. He made the odd noise again, and it helped even more, and it felt like a balloon was deflating in his chest.

And as suddenly as he felt good, he found himself unable to breathe. He gasped for breath, trying to get the air in his uncooperating lungs, but nothing seemed to be having an effect. He tried to breathe in deeply, as things like that had worked in the past, but if anything, it seemed to make things worse. He could feel himself falling to the ground, as his chest burned with the effort he was using to try and get air into it. It seemed like his lungs were just not processing the air, as no matter how many times he forced them to expand and contract, there did not seem to be an effect on his breathing status.

He opened his eyes a sliver (wondering exactly when he closed them), and could see Hannibal's form fluttering around his body, seeming to be checking over his state of being. Whatever he found caused him to tsk, and then Hannibal's hand was gripping his, and it was suddenly on the Alpha's chest. He could feel his breathing, and he tried to match his breathing to Hannibal's, but it was hard. Everything was screaming at him to breathe and all he wanted to do was scream back what did they think he was trying to do? It was not his fault that his lungs did not seem to be willing to cooperate at that moment.

He tried to curl up on his side, but the gentle hand kept him on his back. He wondered if keeping his body flat was better for his breathing than curling up. He thought it might be, but as his chest was burning, all he wanted to do was curl up so that he could protect that area. It sounded like an amazing idea to him, but his Alpha kept him on his back. Slowly but surely, his lungs accepted the air, and he started to feel better. He wondered what had caused this incident, but just felt relieved that he could breathe once more. He just laid there on his back, basking in his ability to breathe fully once more.

He wondered why his body was screwing him over like this when all he wanted was to get his body back on track. He wanted to get the pheromones that he needed, and keep living his life, maybe occasionally hanging out with the Alpha, and if they kept getting along, with very few boundaries broken, maybe a bond in his future. That did not seem to be what was happening, as his body seemed to be fluctuating between feeling fine and going into a dangerously unhealthy mood. It was honestly exhausting, and he wanted to sleep but knew that was not an option in this case. He needed to be awake and aware until he left the clinic, whenever that would have been.

The Alpha slowly removed his hand, and he let out a yelp. The Alpha immediately put his hand on his wrist and the sudden pain melted away. Oh no, this could not be good. Why was the touch of the Alpha seeming to be healing? Would he have to touch them always? He would not like that, as he needed time alone. He was a very solitary person, liking his individual pursuits, with just him and his dogs against the world.

Long walks in nature were his happy place, and if there was fishing involved as well, even better in his books. The dogs could frolic around the bank of the creek while he caught some fish using fly fishing skills. Making lures was often something that he did while thinking, and he half wished he could work on one of his lures at that moment.

He looked at the Alpha fearfully, not ready to make any commitment, no matter how nice it was to have him around. Something was drawing him to Hannibal, and he was unsure if he liked how much he needed the Alpha at the moment. If anything, it was scary to him, someone who had never needed an Alpha to get on with their life. He wanted that back but he had a feeling this would be his new normal and all he felt was dread. He shifted his hand to the Alphas, and he gripped his hand, allowing him to curl up on his side. He felt a few silent tears slip down his face, as he could admit to being scared at that moment.

Hannibal crouched down next to him, and spoke softly, "What's wrong, Will?"

A shiver went down his spine as he replied, "I don't need an Alpha, but my body does."

Hannibal nodded in understanding as he said, "I feel the same way. My body needs an Omega but I was content without one." He felt a sense of relief as he realized that Hannibal actually understood that he was most likely going through something similar. Maybe this could actually work between the two of them. They could set boundaries and they would actually be respected by the other party.

It made him feel hopeful but the tears kept streaming, as if his body needed the release of emotions.

He spoke quietly, "I am uninterested in sex. Not even during heat, they are more about comfort than anything."

Hannibal blinked but seemed to take it in stride, speaking quietly as he explained, "I see sex as a tool, but not something that I enjoy for the sake of it. I am content going without, and often prefer it, as it is exhausting to keep up the mask of enjoyment." He nodded in understanding, having felt that way many times in dealing with how people saw Omegas.

In order to get what he wanted, sometimes he had to play up the traits that the others looked down upon. It was always exhausting and left him feeling hollow inside, like he was losing a part of himself in order to please others. He hated it and tried to avoid it at all costs.

"What are we going to do?" He said quietly, not wanting any of the people hovering around them to hear.

Hannibal looked thoughtful for a moment before saying, "Can you clear your schedule for the rest of the week?"

He nodded and said, "Besides my dogs, it is easy enough to take time at work, though I worry about any flak I may receive, mostly in the form of comments as they have no reason not to give me the time I ask for. I rarely use my days off."

Hannibal had a bit of trepidation in his voice as he asked, "How many dogs do you have?"

He smiled sweetly as he replied, “Six permanent and many fostered.”

Hannibal seemed concerned as he said, “Can you put a hold on fostering while we find our footing?”

He nodded, having already seen that coming but he was relieved to see that Hannibal understood that he would one day want to return to it, “I only have one foster dog at the moment, and they will be leaving for their forever home this evening. I already left a packet of information for their owner, and they should be okay to do the pickup if I am not there. We will need to get the others.”

Hannibal seemed to sigh as he said, “Ok, I can live with that. Shall we take this week before we make any permanent decisions?”

He nodded in relief as he said, “Yes, we can decide if we want to bond or just remain companions if this cohabitation works out.”

Hannibal smiled softly as he said, “Shall we get out of here then?”

He smiled in return and replied, “Yes, I do believe that would be a good idea.” Hannibal helped him to his feet, and they turned to face the music together. He did not want to have to talk to everyone. He honestly would rather have an argument with Alana or Jack but he also wanted to get out of here. So he made himself be social, despite how much he hated to do so, just to move things forward quickly. After all, you attract more flies with honey than vinegar.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for the kind reviews on the last chapter. I was having a rough day and those made it so much better.

Chapter 7

After several long conversations with all the staff, assuring them that they held no ill will, though it would be easier if they could separate for long periods of time. The Doctors and scientists, who were looking at them like they were their next great science experiment, said that with exposure, they should be able to separate for short periods of time. That greatly relieved him, as he was dreading the constant presence of another person. By mutual agreement, they would not speak about personal details until they were alone (though he was unsure what exactly was more personal than their sex life but what did he know).

He breathed in the fresh air once they stepped outside and they were faced with the first challenge of their new arrangement: whose car would they be taking to their final destination? Luckily, they had parked next to each other so it was easy enough to have the conversation beside both of their cars.

Hannibal smiled at him (and he was really starting to enjoy that smile being directed at him), and said, "How about we take my car." He looked at the neatly kept expensive car. It was then that he saw the logo and knew that it was not meant for the claws of many dogs.

He replied, "If you do not mind the dogs in the car, I do not see a problem with taking your car." He was feeling kind of tired if he was being honest and he would not mind having to not make the drive behind the wheel. He also had no idea where Hannibal lived, but he would insist on driving in the future. After all, they should share the duties of the house between them as he had a feeling that they would be living together for the near future.

Hannibal almost seemed in pain as he nodded, "Yes, we will make it work. Shall I call a service to have your car delivered to your house or mine?" He thought for a moment, but he had a feeling that they would not need the second car. On the other hand, when they were able to be apart, he would like to be able to go wherever pleases him, with a choice of whether Hannibal would be his companion or not.

In the end, he decided, "Send it to my house. When I am ready to be parted from you, whether for an hour or forever, we shall get the car then. I do not know if your place has space so it makes no sense to bring it along."

Hannibal blinked at him, as if something that he said made no sense, "Space is no problem, but I shall take your word on leaving the car behind." He smiled as Hannibal while giving him more information, did not try to argue with his decision. He quite appreciated it and it was a refreshing attitude for an Alpha to have. He could feel himself blushing but was unsure why that was the case. He filed it away to analyze later, in a good section of his mind as it filled him with warmth that his opinion was taken into consideration.

They had to do some quick moving to get into place without any ill feelings occurring from either of them. They could barely reach each other over the hood of the Bentley. They had already opened their door, and a moment later, he let go of Hannibal, threw himself into the car, and caught Hannibal's waiting hand through the doorway.

Then, Hannibal got into the car, and they closed the doors and held hands over the console as he directed Hannibal to his house, wondering if it would be up to Hannibal's standards or not. He figured not, but he was curious nonetheless. He had that quality in common with Hannibal, he just knew it.

A half hour later they were driving down the gravel path and pulled up next to the house. Several dogs bounded out to greet them, now that the cars had stopped moving. All the dogs knew better than to walk in front of a moving vehicle but sometimes they got over excited and forgot. He always made sure to remind them of their safety lessons, and they would be good for a while after.

After all, one learns best by seeing. He petted the dogs, especially little Amelia, who would be going to her new home this evening. He had texted her new owners and told them where the spare key was hidden, and all Amelia's hiding spots so that they could take her home. He had a pretty good surveillance system so he would know if they went anywhere they were not supposed to.

He commonly slept in the nest in the living room, but he led the way past it, to his bedroom. He packed all manner of clothing, as they would have to make a work schedule that worked for the two of them. Hannibal could easily come to his lectures but he would have to cut lab work out.

He could do some picture consulting from Hannibal's place of work and also do grading or office hours from there. He wondered what Hannibal's profession would be, as he could see many that would fit the prim man.

He packed another bag of a few of his hobbies and toiletries. He swung them over his back and led Hannibal to pack up the dog's belongings, including their bed and homemade food. Hannibal raised an eyebrow at the obviously homemade dog food, but he stood by his decision.

The kibble and wet food you could get from the store was full of unhealthy ingredients hidden by fancy words. He found his dogs did better on the homemade recipes. He would have to make a new batch soon, but it would be fine. He hoped that Hannibal had a decent kitchen.

He turned to Hannibal and said, "Is it okay to use your cooking implements to make dog food or should I bring the set I typically use for them?" He was already planning to bring his pile of molds so that he would be able to bulk-make the recipe quicker. He found it went better if he cooked them in the molds then cutting them after the fact, and shaved a bit of time off the cooking. It was good when making enough food to feed at least six hungry dogs, who would sit at the edge of the kitchen and watch his every movement, hoping to get some of the scraps. Sometimes it worked but other times it did not. He had to keep them on their claws after all.

Hannibal gave him a soft look and said, "It should be fine as long as no dog tongue touches the cooking implements."

He nodded in understanding as he dug out the pans, Hannibal's hand on the back of his neck so it was easier to gather the sheets. He smiled, and said, "I'll grab their beds, and that is all I will need."

Hannibal looked at the small pile of things, and said, "Are you sure you have everything?" He nodded in agreement, not feeling the need to put it into words. Hannibal nodded back in turn as they each shouldered several of the items, keeping contact with each other. All his things were neatly packed into the trunk, and then he laid several blankets covering the back seats of the car before herding all of the dogs into the small area. He smiled in satisfaction as a puppy pile occurred, with all of them curled up with one another.

Soon, they were on their way once more, and he found himself curious about the man he would be spending time with. He was surprised by the lack of anxiety he was feeling but he had the oddest sense that Hannibal was being more open with him than he would normally be, thus putting him at ease. He knew that would change, once they were required to return to their everyday life, but that was fine. By that point, he would know how to see through any masks that would be put up, and he honestly expected the same from Hannibal.

He stroked Hannibal's hand unconsciously, as he asked, "So, what job do you have?"

Hannibal glanced over at him before simply replying, "I used to be a surgeon, but now I am a psychologist."

He sighed disappointedly, as he responded, "I have never met a psychologist that sees past my interesting mind, and the way I treat my dynamic."

Hannibal frowned as said, "Well, now you have. Being an Omega does not define you."

He found his lips turning up slightly as he said in response, "Yes, and I can see you really mean that. I could have been an Alpha and you would be treating me the exact same way you are now."

Hannibal inclined his head in agreement, "I make judgments on people based on how they act, not what primary and secondary gender they are."

"I notice that you did not say anything about my mind," he remarked shrewdly.

Hannibal actually seemed to blush a bit, though it was faint so he could barely tell, as he replied, "I find a smart mind attractive, and I am not aware of any other details about you. Perhaps if I knew your last name I may, but there is something freeing about having no preconceived notions about one another." He made a noise of agreement, as it was nice to have only known Hannibal as the kind Alpha that had tried to help him when he had been frightened by the scent of an Alpha. Hannibal then continued, "What is it that you do, Will?"

He replied, "I teach at the FBI academy, consult on some cases, and do forensic bug analysis."

Hannibal seemed proud as he said, "If you could rank your three roles, what would the ranking be?"

He was thoughtful for a moment before saying, "I believe teaching, followed by the bugs, and finished up with the consulting. While the cases are interesting, they often put me into a headspace that I prefer to not be in so I do it sparingly, no matter what others may think of my limits."

Hannibal replied, "It is hard to set boundaries and even harder to keep them."

He could not help but grumble in agreement, "Yes, that is very true. I feel like every day I have to fight in order to keep my limits in place. If it is not one person telling me what I should be doing, then it was another. Sometimes, I wish I was an Omega of the old, who could take out anyone who displeases them but all that would do is put me in jail, at the whims of someone like Chilton." He had only met the man once and had wanted to punch him in the face.

The only reason he had not, is that he had been presenting in less than an hour and had not wanted to be kicked out. Nonetheless, he had avoided the man like the plague since.

He could see Hannibal's eyes light up as he said, "I have always been fascinated by Omegas of the old, and how the perception of Omegas have changed over the years. Let's say it is a pet project of mine."

Something clicked in his mind at that moment, and he could not help but say, "Are you the Hannibal Lector who wrote the insightful book on how Omegas should be revered, and treated more like in the olden days, showing how things went wrong over the years.

It is one of the only truly accurate books I have found, and despite being written by an Alpha, seems to give Omegas a voice that we never have in literature written by Alphas, always the side piece, the slut, never shining as you make them out to be in your book. I have been looking for an opportunity to meet you for a while."

Hannibal smirked, almost seeming smug as he said, "Guilty as charged. Are you the William Graham who wrote the book on insects and time of death?"

He tilted his head in agreement, "Looks like we figured out who each other are. So much for animity."

Hannibal chuckled and he could not help but join in. Then Hannibal said, "We barely know much about one another, I say the animity will exist until we break down each other's forts."

He barely was able to speak through his chuckling as he said, "Let's keep working on that right now." They discussed many topics as the drive went on, only stopping as they approached the gate to a large home. He knew immediately that this was Hannibal's space, and was honored to be allowed to see behind the curtain. He smiled as they made the first steps toward the house, laden with bags while clutching each other, dogs at their heels.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Hannibal insisted on hanging every one of his small collection of clothes in his massive closet. He had no idea why a man needed that many clothing options. Some of them looked unworn while others looked to be favored, with a slightly worn look about them that was not present in the other clothing items. Most would not notice it, but he saw it with the eye of someone who used to get all their clothing items from thrift shops and needed to figure out what would last the longest and was worth what the price was.

He and his dad had very little money while he was growing up. They had made do with what they had, even if they had to move around a lot. More so once he presented, as many Alphas seemed to think he could be bought from his father. He was lucky that his father had been protective over him until the day that he passed, and had not given in to the offers. He had heard horror stories of what had happened to other Omegas in a similar position and even knew some himself.

There was something about seeing the clothes all hung up that made everything real, and he knew at that moment that there was no going back. Hannibal was a part of his life until they decided that they would part ways or until they bonded.

He found that he liked the comfortable silence that he had fallen into with Hannibal, each of them lost in their minds as they went about menial tasks around the bedroom, setting it up to be habitable by both of them for the near future as touching was a must between them. They had found that as long as they were brushing against each other, they did not need full contact, which was a relief. They had already conquered the awkwardness of using the restroom, and that was best not discussed further.

It made him anxious to be in a state of undress around the Alpha, but they had come up with a solution that worked for both of them in those incidents. They soon ended up in the kitchen, with Hannibal cooking, and him helping, brushing against one another as they prepared for the meal. He felt honored to be allowed in Hannibal's most valued space, as he could tell this was the space that meant the most to Hannibal, where it felt like it was the heart of the house.

The fact that he was allowed to help Hannibal create his masterpieces was humbling, and heady at the same time, and he did not want this feeling to stop. He thought he was a decent cook but Hannibal was on a completely different level.

He could tell that Hannibal wanted to set up the plates in the dining room, but in the end, they stayed in the kitchen, on the island, legs entwined as they ate the food. The food was better than anything that he had ever eaten before. His stomach actually felt hungry for the first time in days, and he had to stop himself from taking large bites and stuffing the food into his mouth like he was a chipmunk. Instead, he ate small bites and looked mournfully at the plate when it was empty. He wished that he could have had a bigger portion, but he would not be greedy, and take what he was given.

Hannibal gave him a soft look and scooped up another portion of the meal for him. He beamed at the Alpha, and dug into the second portion, feeling mostly satisfied upon completion. For dessert, Hannibal served a bourbon-soaked pear with a scoop of ice cream. It complemented the entree perfectly, and he was comfortably full by the time they were working on the dishes.

Hannibal preferred to hand wash everything and he just smiled at him fondly, as he washed dish after dish and Hannibal dried each one carefully, stacking them on the counter. Once the dishes were all washed, they would each take a stack to the correct cabinet, brushing against each other constantly to prevent any side effects from occurring.

He found that the more they were in contact with each other, the easier it was to break apart from each other for several moments before the effects came rushing back. It filled him with a sense of relief that they could take care of personal business in privacy, or change their clothes briefly.

He was becoming more comfortable with Hannibal, as they spent more time talking but there were certain parts of him that did not trust him quite yet. He got the impression that he was hiding something, that there was something untrue about the facade of the house. Hannibal was open with him, so he tried not to think about it, but it was always there in the back of his mind, reminding him of the truth of Alphas.

Alphas could not be trusted. They would take and take and offer nothing in return. They did not think of the implications of what they did and the lives that were destroyed in the process, the mess that they made. He had never minded his gender, seeing nothing different about himself than his peers but Alphas did, crowding around him, not backing away when he asked.

He would yell and yell for them to leave him alone but they would not listen, and no one would step in to help. He had to be his own advocate and had learned self-defense in the process, resorting to it when Alphas did not listen to him. For whatever reason, many people saw him as the one in the wrong, but if a Beta did that to a Beta, it would have been the proper reaction. It was so frustrating at times. He hated the raging double standard that existed.

Hannibal had been nothing but kind so far but he could not help but wonder how long that would last. How long would it be before he overstayed his welcome, and things went from wonderful to horrible? His anxiety told him he was living on borrowed time but was it so bad to enjoy things as long as they lasted? He did not think so, unable to help but smile at Hannibal as they enjoyed a drink in his study, each of them with a reading material of choice in hand. It was a nice way to complete the evening, and keep his mind off of what was coming next: the sleeping arrangements.

He knew they would have to share a bed, as the few short minutes they could be apart may allow trips to the restroom or really quick showers, but it did not allow them to sleep alone. As he checked on his dogs, Hannibal by his side, he took them outside to run through the carefully kept backyard.

He was able to stop them from causing any damage but he knew that it would be a hard battle to keep winning. He would speak to Hannibal about a space to dig and tear up but now was not the time. He changed his area yearly and used it for an area to grow a small garden, as the grass was already removed so he figured might as well make use of it.

They changed into their night clothes, facing away from each other, but reaching back to touch each other's arms as they changed, and once he pulled on his soft, cotton sleep pants with little dog heads and a ratty t-shirt that read, "Got Dogs?" a parody of the got milk campaign and he could not help but purchase the shirt years ago. They were soft with wear, and he liked the way that they felt on his skin.

Hannibal was wearing a pair of red striped sleep pants, with a matching red sweater that looked very soft. He could not help but reach out and touch the fabric, and rub it between his fingers. It was one of the softest things that he had ever felt and he did not want to let go of it.

They stood there, in the bedroom, next to the samurai statue for an embarrassingly long time before he finally made his fingers let go. Hannibal chuckled, pulled off his sweater, and passed it over to him. He did not hesitate and pulled it over his head, basking in the softness of it, and not even minding that Hannibal was not shirtless, as no one had ever given him the clothes off of their back.

It just made him feel like he was important to someone, even if it was just one person, who would care if he suddenly stopped speaking to them. He had one person who cared about him now, and it was a heady feeling. He did not want it to end.

He was given the left side of the bed, nearest to the window. Hannibal would be between him and the door but he did not see that as controlling but instead as protective. Hannibal would stop any threat from reaching him. Hannibal settled himself against his back, and he could feel his heat radiating against his body. It was comforting, and he fell asleep with a smile on his face, content for the first time in a long while. Hannibal would keep him safe, after all, he was his Alpha.

He awoke easily the next morning, slipping from asleep to awake from one moment to the next. Hannibal and he had shifted in their sleep so that instead of both of them on their side, Hannibal was on his back and he was sleeping on his chest, head right on top of his heart.

He stayed still for a moment and realized that Hannibal was gently stroking his hair, and he fought the urge to fall back asleep, feeling comfortable and safe. He could not keep Hannibal confined to his bed though as it was not fair to the man to do so. He shifted slightly showing that he was awake and Hannibal removed his hand. He could not stop the noise of protest that he released and so the hand returned to his hair, tugging slightly on his curls in a teasing manner, as if saying okay brat. There was something intimate about this moment and he never wanted it to end.

In the end, it was his bladder that forced him from the bed, and he stretched briefly as he did so, feeling refreshed in a way that he had forgotten. He and Hannibal each went through their morning routine, each taking quick turns in the restroom. Before he knew it, they were once more in the kitchen, this time working on breakfast. He was relieved that it just seemed to be some kind of pancakes with a poached egg on top, served with coffee, the most important

part of the meal, his lifeblood in the morning. To be honest, it felt like some days he was only able to function due to this glorious drink.

They stood, slipping coffee while the pancakes were sizzling away in the pan, being flipped every so often by Hannibal, who could throw the pancakes to truly amazing heights in the air, and catch them. The poached egg was placed on top of a small stack for each of them, followed by a few small pieces of sausage, and a liberal covering of what seemed to be some kind of homemade blueberry sauce. He took a careful mouthful of the meal once they settled at the bar once more, and had to cover up the moan that he wanted to let out. He had never had pancakes that tasted so good, the yolk of the egg mixed with the blueberry sauce. A bit too soon, the plate was empty and he leaned back in his chair, enjoying the comfortable atmosphere and the rest of his coffee. All good things had to come to an end, as there was a knock on the door.

Chapter End Notes

Any guesses as to who is at the door?

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

He and Hannibal shared a look of confusion, neither of them expecting any visitors. He was pretty sure no one even knew his current location. The clinic had told him they would take care of calling off work for the rest of the week, but he would need to have a plan in place for Monday. It was something that they would need to discuss, but with any luck, they may be able to part for short periods of time, allowing him to teach a class or Hannibal to have a meeting with a client, reuniting as soon as they were over to prevent any side effects. It was probably wishful thinking, to not disrupt their lives so completely but a guy could dream, couldn't he?

Feeling a bit nervous about who was on the other side of the door, he offered his hand to Hannibal and was relieved when he took it. He noticed out of the corner of his eye that Hannibal palmed one of his many scalpels that he had everywhere around the house. Instead of finding it creepy, he was relieved that Hannibal was taking measures to protect the two of them. He could take care of himself, and he had a feeling that Hannibal knew that was well. They would fight side by side or not at all.

They approached the door, hand in hand, and Hannibal looked through the peephole and seemed to sigh in disappointment as if this was the last thing that he wanted but it was not a threat to either of them physically. He did not know if he was relieved or disappointed in this turn as he was oddly interested in seeing the Alpha fight, to see how good of a protector he actually was.

He blinked, having never thought about an Alpha like that before, but in order to be a good mate, fighting was an essential part of it, whether physical or with words. He knew that Hannibal had the words, but did he have the physical skills as well? He would have to wait and see.

Hannibal still shifted a step in front of him as he opened the door and he resisted the urge to sigh at the person on the other side. Of course, he knew Alana, and he wondered what would come out of her mouth this time. He had found an Alpha, someone who seemed trustworthy but he wondered if she would just tear it all apart so that he would not be happy, so he could keep being her pet project.

He would not allow that to happen, as he liked Hannibal, as a friend at the moment but maybe one day more romantic than platonic. He was not ready for that sort of tag yet but Alana did not need to know that.

Alana blinked at seeing him here, especially so early in the morning and still in his Pajamas. Hannibal was in a similar state of dress, and both of them looked slightly disheveled. Alana seemed speechless for a long moment before saying, "Hannibal, I was not expecting you to have any guests."

Hannibal responded, "As I told you over text, I would be indisposed for the next few days, and would not make our monthly meeting. I am unsure why you felt the need to go against my wishes and come over unannounced. It is quite rude, Alana."

Alana looked a bit shocked by Hannibal's reaction, but from his position, he could feel how tense Hannibal was about having another Alpha in his territory, with an Omega that he was basically courting. He appreciated the fact that Hannibal was keeping his cool, and not growling or attacking at the drop of the hat. His Alpha was a lion in sheep's clothing, and he liked that fact. He had a feeling that the Alpha would never be boring.

Alana finally spoke, "I was worried. You do not cancel at the last minute for no reason, so I figured I'd check on you. And Will is here, so I don't see a problem with me being here as well."

Hannibal pinched the bridge of his nose as if he was holding back some choice words but in the end said, "Will has decided to take up my invitation to stay with me for a few days along with his companions. I do not recall extending such an invitation to you as well." Buster, as if sensing his unease, came trotting out of the room that had been taken over by the dogs, and stood up on his leg, begging for pets.

He petted him, and calmed down slightly, feeling better. Alana was watching him with a look of muted horror while Hannibal just seemed to be resigned to the dog hair, but he noticed that the hand gripping his other hand tightened, as if he was reminding himself that Will was safely behind him.

Alana seemed to have gained her voice once more and attempted to order him away. "Will, can you give Hannibal and me a few moments alone? I'd like to speak to Hannibal about something we spoke of recently"

He made no move to move, and Hannibal was the one to reply, "Anything you say to me, can be said in front of Will as well." Alana clenched her jaw as if she wanted to protest but seemed to sense that it would fall on deaf ears, as neither he nor Hannibal even gave the slightest notion of moving away from one another. If anything, they pushed closer together, and the contact soothed the anxiety that Buster had not. Buster, as if sensing that he was no longer needed, trotted off once more to join his siblings in the other room.

Alana finally sighed loudly before speaking, "Hannibal, Will is using you as I have been on him about having a heat, and here he is, with an Alpha."

Hannibal looked at him, and said with his eyes "Should I tell her you have been in heat for several days now?"

He blinked and replied the same way, "How do you know?"

"You have a slight hint of cinnamon that I can tell is not part of your own scent, as it just barely clashes with it, similar to the artificial scent that signals most Omegas are in heat."

"And yet you have been the perfect gentleman, not an inappropriate touch from you."

“Your scent makes me want to cuddle and feed you more than anything else.”

“That’s the best thing a person has ever said to me.”

“I will endeavor for you to say things like that as often as possible.”

“And I shall return the favor.”

As one, they turned back to Alana, and she was looking at them like they were a particularly interesting puzzle, and sounded a bit scandalized as she said, “You guys are bonded?”

He replied, “No, Hannibal and I are taking time to get to know each other before deciding if we should take that kind of permanent step.” He was pretty sure that bonding required intimacy and the exchanging of bites. Most people assumed intimacy was sex but there were other forms of it as well, such as being vulnerable and caring for one another, being each other's rocks, exchanging pleasant touches like Hannibal playing with his hair that morning, or the sharing of the bed. Intimacy was in the eye of the beholder, and that was the way that he saw it.

Alana looked at him like he was stupid as she said, “Then what was that?”

He shared a look with Hannibal then responded, “What was what?”

Alana seemed done with him, as she looked at Hannibal instead when she said, “The silent conversation you had with Will.”

He replied anyway, “You don’t need to be bonded, have a silent conversation, Alana.”

Alana actually rolled her eyes as she said, “I know that but you need to be having one like the one you guys had. There was no movement of anything, you just stared at one another, seemingly entranced.”

He shrugged as he changed the subject slightly and said, “Hannibal makes a good pillow.”

Alana now seemed aghast for some reason as she said, “Will, you can’t just say something like that.”

He shrugged as he said, “Why not? It’s not a lie?”

Alana seemed frustrated but luckily she seemed to have forgotten the bonding train of thought. He would know if he was bonded or not, wouldn’t he? Alana just said, “It may offend some parties to know you only like them for the way their body feels.”

Hannibal spoke up in his defense, “Alana, I do not mind. In fact, I see it as the highest compliment that he was that comfortable in my presence.” He blinked as he realized what Hannibal had said was true. When had he stopped worrying about the fact that he was alone with an Alpha?

He could feel his mind spiraling but he just took a deep breath, not wanting to freak out while Alana was here. It would just play into her idea that he was weak when the opposite was true.

He was stronger than she knew. Hannibal stroked his hand as if he could tell that he was spiraling, and he appreciated it, as it gave him something to focus on while calming his mind.

He had always been the kind of person who spoke bluntly, and it had always driven Alana crazy like it was a personal slight against her. She always tried to change the way that he spoke as if he had to change to fit her whims. It was why he had never looked to her to be an Alpha companion: she would just try to shape him into her ideal instead of both of them morphing into better forms of himself. It was kind of nice that Hannibal had not tried to change anything about him, only made possible suggestions for improvement that he could take or leave.

He was tired of this conversation, and honestly wished Alana would leave, especially with her next comment, "I don't suppose I could get some breakfast since I am here?" Did she show up and just expect Hannibal to drop everything in order to feed her? He felt a bit of fury in the pit of his stomach about the way that she seemed to be using Hannibal as well. She was just like Jack, though she was more subtle in her manipulations.

Hannibal looked regretful as he said, "Will and I just finished our meals, and I need to go grocery shopping for more items. Maybe in the future, we could have a meal together?" He had a feeling that Hannibal was just saying that, as he had seen the state of his fridge and pantry, and there was plenty of food to make another meal if he chose him.

He did not, and he fought the urge to smile but did not show it, not even when Alana shot him a victorious look, as if she had won something. He figured that she would lose that look when the invitation never came, and Will was still talking to Hannibal.

Finally, Alana had allowed herself to be shown from the entryway out of the house. He just stayed in his corner and let out a breath of relief when the door was closed. He looked at Hannibal hopefully, not even sure what he was asking for but he had a feeling that Hannibal would know. Hannibal smiled fondly at him and said, "Why don't we take your dogs for a walk through the neighborhood, and I can show you the highlights?"

He smiled widely and replied, "That sounds wonderful. Is there really a market in the field down the street? I saw signs for it last night when we drove in?"

Hannibal smiled widely, as if this had been his plan all along, "Yes, I thought perhaps we could walk through the stalls and see if anything catches your eye."

He nodded eagerly and ran off to dress in clothes that were not his pajamas. He settled on his best pair of jeans with one of his neater flannel shirts. As the weather was not too cool out, he finished the weather with a beanie and forgoed the coat. He leashed up each of the dogs, and they were waiting eagerly by the door as Hannibal returned, wearing nice slacks and the red sweater that he had loaned to him the night before. He liked the way that their scents mingled, it calmed a part of him that he did not know was agitated.

He hooked his arm around Hannibal and they set off, with the dogs leading the way. He had not noticed until later that they had spent several minutes apart with no ill consequences. It felt like something in them had settled, and he had a feeling that it would be explored more in the future.

Chapter End Notes

Congrats to those who guessed correctly :)

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The walk to the market was nice, though he had to spend a lot of time corralling the dogs who wanted to run in every direction. They knew better than to try and run off but had to be encouraged to stop their sniffing and continue down the path. By the time that they had reached the local market, he was sweating quite a bit while Hannibal looked like he had stepped out of the pages of a catalog, not a hair out of place.

He could not help but feel like he did not belong here, and that he should get as far away from here as possible before Hannibal realized it as well. He did not want to become any more attached before it happened, but he would recover eventually and probably need to be matched with another Alpha in order to keep his health up.

Something ached in him at the thought of leaving but what choice did he have?

He browsed a few of the stands, the dogs sitting patiently at his side until he was ready to move on. He found a necklace with two gems, one that was the color of his eyes and the other that was the color of Hannibals. The necklace called to him like no other jewelry had ever called before.

He talked to the nice older woman who ran the stand about the history of the twisted gems but when she said the price, he knew that he could not justify it, no matter how much he wanted to.

He did not even look over to where Hannibal was looking at fruit at the stand next to this stand, having the oddest feeling that if he asked for it, it would be his. He could not do that to Hannibal, as he would not use the man for the money that he had. He may have been living a comfortable lifestyle but everything was very carefully budgeted so that he had the necessary funds.

He had already spent the extra money this month on a mixture of fishing items and new dog beds for all the dogs, as many of them had been wearing thin, and Max's had a hole in it that he would catch his claw in and then whine until he was detangled, no matter what time of night it was.

He put the necklace down, and moved on, knowing it was not worth being upset about but something in him felt torn up. He looked through a few of the other stands, purchasing some fresh vegetables to make a stir fry with. Hannibal found him looking over some chicken meat, debating what piece to buy. He blinked when he realized that he had been away from Hannibal for at least an hour, without ill consequence.

What had changed in the last few hours as they were still experiencing the symptoms the night before. He pondered it, as Hannibal wrapped an arm around his waist, and he leaned into it, thinking nothing of it.

He turned to Hannibal and said, "I'd like to make you a chicken stir fry for lunch today, What kind of chicken meat do you prefer?"

Hannibal looked over the meat for a moment before pointing to the whole chicken. He nodded in agreement and paid for the bird, knowing he would be able to butcher it with ease, having done it many times before as a basis for dog food in the past.

The dogs eyed the bag with the chicken but he deftly directed their attention away from it, and they happily chased each other down the path, distracted for the moment but he knew it would not last for long before they were once more eyeing the bag.

Hannibal finally spoke once more as they were heading back to his place, "I enjoy cooking, you do not have to take the duties over."

He beamed at the man as he replied, "I want us to share the duties, not have one of us do the bulk of the work."

Hannibal softened at that as he said, "Well, I just suppose I shall have to be your sous chef then."

He knocked their shoulders together as he said, "You shall be the best I have ever had." Hannibal preened at him as if that was the highest compliment he could have received.

They walked in a companionable silence until they were back in the kitchen. He quickly gave the dogs some food and fresh water and watched them until they settled down to sleep once more, tired from their exciting morning.

He washed his hands, and then the vegetables before lining them up on the counter neatly, so that he did not forget anything in his preparations of the meal. If this lineup was not present, he would forget something, as had happened many times before. He had once left out the sweet potato in the dog food recipe and only the most picky dogs had been willing to eat the resulting kibble and he had to remake the batch from scratch, to his frustration.

He spoke, as both he and Hannibal started to cut the vegetables into thin strips, "Did you notice anything interesting about our trip to the market?"

Hannibal was silent for a moment before replying, "No, everything seemed to be in order."

He smirked at him as he asked, "Are you sure?"

Hannibal thought for a long moment before giving the same response as before, "No, everything was nice. No rude people to be seen today."

He wondered about the emphasis on rude people but he let it go, as now was not the time to bring up something like that. There was a darkness underlying the word that he wanted to follow to its source but he did not want to peer into his darkness in turn. He had a feeling that if he dug into Hannibal's darkness, it was only fair he showed a bit of his own, but would Hannibal accept him when he knew the full truth of everything he had done? He was unsure

of that and he already did not want to lose him, though it was a certainty at this point. It was only a matter of time and he wanted to savor the time they had left.

He continued to smirk as he questioned, "Did you perhaps notice that we were able to part for much of the time, with no ill consequences?"

Hannibal seemed taken aback for a moment, as if it had not even crossed his mind but was able to reply quickly nonetheless, "That is good news. As much as I enjoy your presence, we also need moments of solitude. Will you do me the honor of at least remaining until the weekend comes to a close?"

Something in him twisted painfully at the thought of him leaving, and he could not help but gasp and drop the knife, staring blankly at the wall, trying to push away the pain that was piercing his chest. He finally pushed forth the following words, "You will be doing me a bigger favor than you realize by letting me stay with you. I do not believe the time has come for us to part ways just yet." There was a layer of protection about not being home. No one could come bug him to return to work, not that anyone did except for Jack.

Jack seemed convinced that he should be at his beck and call, even though he was entitled to time off like everyone else. He always rejected those requests, going back to what he was doing before until Jack took the hint and left him be.

One of his neighbors had heard him struggling to get away from Jack and had called the cops. He was still impressed that they had been heard from the road but he had been glad when the police had removed Jack from his property and assured him that they would have a talk with the Alpha and report it to the FBI so they were aware of Jack's obsession with him. He had laughed harshly and said this was not the first time that Jack had tried to take him somewhere without his consent and nothing had been done besides a slap on the wrist.

That had infuriated the officer so much that the next time he saw Jack, he was being escorted to his presence in order to prevent anything from occurring. It took six months for Jack to convince his superiors that it was not needed, much to his dissatisfaction, as every time Jack had started to raise his voice as Will had said no, they would drag him out of the room. Jack now did not raise his voice unless he really wanted to emphasize something, so long a few times a conversation instead of the whole thing.

He looked over at Hannibal and saw that he was gripping both the counter and blade harshly, taking harsh breaths. He reached out shakily and put his hand over Hannibal's. Hannibal's eye snapped over to him, and he only smiled at him, not feeling like he had the words. It was not quite Hannibal that he was looking at but instead, his inner beast, as if he had lost his facade.

He stepped closer and suddenly he was in Hannibal's arms. He could feel the man breathing harshly into his hair as if he was trying to disappear into it. He knew that he should be afraid but all he could feel was comfort and protection.

He heard a twig break outside and both of their heads sprang towards the sound. He caught a glance of a porky-looking man, dressed in high-class clothes but they were messily fitting as if he was trying to be something he was not. He shared a look with the beast of Hannibal and

they sprang into action, knowing that the intruder of their den needed to be stopped before they got back to tell others what they had found.

Hannibal pulled a scalpel out of his sleeve, and he picked up the kitchen knife that he had dropped and whistled for his dogs. They appeared at his side at once, all growling ominously.

He did not tell many people that his dogs doubled as guard dogs, to fight by his side if needed, but also to protect themselves if he was not around. He let out another whistle, this one an order to surround the person, and opened the door. The dogs took off outside and ran around the house with ease, Hannibal and him on their heels. He was glad for the large hedges that blocked their view from neighbors as he would calmly tell anyone who asked that they were chasing a squirrel.

He tilted his head at the surrounded figure, who seemed to be blubbing and crying. What did the man expect coming to an Alpha's territory uninvited? Did he not expect there to be consequences, especially from a powerful Alpha like his? He had a feeling that he knew Hannibal but he made no move to stop his mate from cutting their throat, and the crying stopped as suddenly as it had started. He looked at the man considerably, and could not help but say, "He does look kinda squirrel-like."

His Alpha, who was in the middle of cutting up their kill expertly, looked at him with confused eyes. He just smiled and waved him back to his task. The dogs stayed alert next to him, waiting for their next order. Once his Alpha was satisfied with the meat that was gathered, he whistled two long bursts, and the dogs took care of the rest.

They ate everything that remained with no complaints until they were left just bits and pieces of flimsy bones that he knew better than to eat. He had taught them well after all. One of the dogs dug a hole and he calmly placed the remains into it and patted the dirt back into place until the flower garden was uniform once more.

He followed his Alpha back to the kitchen, where he placed his slabs of meat on the counter. He thought he would feel disgust as his instincts started to fade but all he felt was satisfaction of a successful hunt. He could see Hannibal coming back to himself as well, and could not help but think that they had quite the conversation in their future.

Instead of dreading it like earlier in the day, he felt prepared for it, as they had exchanged a bit of darkness already and he was enthralled, longing for more.

Chapter End Notes

Should I post the last chapter today as well? Descions Descions...

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

As requested...

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

He propped his hip against the counter, relaxed, as he could see Hannibal's layers being reapplied until he could once more see the perfect person suit in front of him, not a hair out of place. He smirked ferally, allowing just a glimpse of his teeth to be seen. Something in Hannibal seemed to relax, and he could not help the satisfaction that he felt at that reaction.

For the first time, it felt like every part of him was in agreement with the rest. There was no need to hide or be scared. No other Alphas would have him. It would be Hannibal or nothing, he could see what he had been missing from the beginning: an Alpha that would worship him and embrace all parts of him, as he would do in turn.

Hannibal spoke softly as if he did not want to break the understanding between them, “Have you figured it out yet?”

“Yes,” he replied simply as the pieces all snapped into place. He knew exactly who Hannibal was and all his instincts did was praise him for finding such a smart and clever Alpha, one who would be able to keep up with them in every way. No longer did they have to pander to those who thought Omegas were lesser as his Alpha clearly saw him as an equal.

It was freeing in a way that he had never allowed himself to think about before, knowing better than to rock the boat too much. He could tip it slightly, like he did working for the FBI but not tip it fully, by allowing others to protect him to make them feel good about themselves. If he wanted to, he could have taken out Jack many times over but he did not, due to the attention that it would cause.

Hannibal spread his arms out, giving into his dramatic side as he said, “Who am I then?”

He bared his teeth as he said, “Why the Chesapeake Ripper of course. No other serial killer could hold a candle to you.” Hannibal visibly preened once more and he could not help but chuckle fondly, and step closer to the man.

He reached up and ran a hand through his hair, wanting his scent to linger. Hannibal leaned into the touch, and nuzzled into his hand, spreading his scent over the limb in turn. He could not help but bring the hand up to his face and take in the scent of his Alpha.

Hannibal took a step forward and stroked his neck, and he could not help but bear his neck in turn, wanting nothing more than for the Alpha to bite it, to mark him as his, forever. He knew they had a lot of work to make their lives compatible with each other, but he knew that they

would make it work. After all, they were compatible in the best way: their darkness, so he knew they would find the way.

Hannibal nosed his neck, and ran a tooth over his bonding gland, making him shiver in delight. Hannibal then rose in his esteem as he said, “Are you sure, my angel?”

He knew he was blushing as he said, “I have never been more sure of any decision I have made in my life.” Hannibal nuzzled his throat for another long moment before his teeth sliced into his neck, and he could feel him sucking the blood from the wound, creating a deep bond between the two of them. He then removed his teeth and he could feel him mouthing at the wound as if wanting to make sure it closed properly and scarred cleanly.

The minute Hannibal stepped away to study his handy work, he pounced, jumping into Hannibal's arms. Hannibal caught him by instinct and he immediately leaned in and bit Hannibal's neck in turn, making the bond equal and a true two-way bond, the only type of bond that he would ever accept.

Hannibal grumbled with pleasure, seeming pleased by the turn of events as he worried the wound that he had created with his tongue until the blood was no longer flowing. He noticed that the bond was stronger than he expected it to be, seeming to be of steel rather than of twine like he had been told to expect. It filled him with pleasure that they were such a good match.

They stood staring at each other, the counter filled with half-cut vegetables, raw chicken still wrapped, and a lot of human meat. It finally hit him that Hannibal may know the man that he had butchered and he could not help but ask, “Do you know who we took care of?”

Hannibal with a great look of distaste on his face said, “Franklin, a clingy patient of mine. If I knew that he had stooped to house visits I would have referred him as I am not interested in interacting with him outside of sessions. I have a feeling that if he had gotten away unseen today, he would have started showing up everywhere, trying to become a part of my life.”

The way Hannibal spoke was as if he was discussing the gum on the bottom of his shoe as if he had no care for the man who was his patient. He supposed those two things were not mutually exclusive, and he had heard that some people could turn off their emotions but he had never seen it. It was fascinating as much as it was jarring but it oddly suited the man.

He looked at Hannibal and said, “Is the meat still good or has it been too long on the counter.” Hannibal looked over the meat that was on the counter and made a look of great distaste. He wondered what was wrong but luckily his Hannibal was willing to explain.

Hannibal explained, “There is too much fat on any of these organs to be good food. What was my instinctual self thinking?”

Will patted his back in comfort and replied, “He just wanted to prove he was a good provider.”

Hannibal still looked slightly disgruntled as he said, “Couldn't he have had better taste though? It would have been nice to cook with some fresh meat but all this will have to be

disposed of. Would your dogs want it? They will not mind the fat.”

He looked at the animals who were still wandering around protectively, their circle now including both of them rather than just one of them, knowing they were now a pair.

He finally replied, “At dinner time they can have some chunks in their kibble.” Hannibal nodded, cut the meat into pieces, and placed it into a bowl in the fridge.

It looked like a few pounds of pork and no one would think anything of seeing it in the fridge. It was just nondiscriminate meat. It was clever and made him want to speak to him even more.

Sadly, the chicken was a lost cause as well. It smelled like it had started to go off. He was surprised by how quickly that it had happened but figured it had been sitting out for most of the morning, with only minimal chilling so that could be the cause. He placed it into the trash and started to clean up the remnants of the vegetables that were on the counter, leaving just the cut pieces and the whole vegetables remaining.

He turned to Hannibal, “Do you have any meat we can use for the stir fry?”

Hannibal nodded, and asked, “Are you ok with meat from the rude?”

He nodded and responded, “If I had a problem with your diet, I would not have bonded with you in the first place.” Hannibal seemed pleased by that answer, and he waved him over to the pantry. It was then that he learned of Hannibal's Murder Castle, through a trap door to a clean white room, with a large fridge. He looked up and he could see the boards of the pantry.

He could not help but comment, “You really should seal up those boards properly or someone will spill something in the pantry and find this place due to liquid dripping down between the boards.”

Hannibal studied the boards as if he were seeing the problem for the first time before saying, “Yes, I do believe you are correct. I am surprised that I overlooked such a pivotal problem.”

He shrugged and said, “I have the eye of a builder. I used to help my Dad fix up whatever house that we were staying in when I was younger. By fixing it up a bit, we had money removed from the rent so it was less of a burden on the small paycheck of a dock worker.” He had fond memories of learning the best way to patch up a hole or repair an oven or once, take apart an AC unit and put it back together.

He had always liked to work with his hands, however, he was not interested in doing it as a full-time trade. Nonetheless, he often repaired boat engines for people in order to keep his skills sharp.

Hannibal then questioned, “Would you be willing to do the repairs necessary to keep this space hidden?”

He nodded, and said, “Yes, it will be a good project for me.”

Hannibal, who had pulled a large piece of meat from the freezer in front of him, shocked him with his next question, "What is the source of your darkness?"

He felt the coldness of the memory but for the first that he could remember, it was not a fearful thing, but something he could look back at with no emotion. He knew that it was Hannibal's warm presence in his mind, guiding his mind to not be lost in the emotions as it so often was but to create a sturdy fort.

He finally spoke vaguely, "Let's just say it was a pattern of Alphas with overpowering scents that would not take no for an answer, and I had to embrace my darkness to escape their grasp. I made sure they never hurt a person again, using their profession as a Doctor for horrible things. And you?"

Hannibal looked vaguely proud of him as he said, "Loss of my family, especially my precious little sister. I found out later that I had been fed her by our captors. I took my revenge upon my escape, and the urge never fully disappeared I suppose, to rid the world of the rude, like the captors who held us captive were."

He pulled the Alpha in a hug and could feel him basking in the comfort of his scent, seeming to be centering himself. He found himself doing the same thing with the scent of his Alpha. They stood there for a long moment until their stomachs rumbled, reminding them of their interrupted meal prep.

They shared an amused look and left the basement hideaway, meat in hand. They prepped the rest of the stir fry, side by side, exchanging casual touches because they wanted to, not because they needed to. It was freeing to choose the touch, to be comfortable enough to do it.

He knew that his trauma of the past was not fully gone and would most likely rear its head once more. The weekend was quickly approaching, meaning that once the weekend came to a close, the two of them would have to return to work, to the real world.

Would their relationship survive or would it crumble to bits in the presence of the challenges that they had to face? He knew that Hannibal would be by his side, and he would be by his. They would persevere if only because the two of them were too stubborn to allow anything else to occur.

He found the idea of hunting with his mate to be a heady proposition. It would be marvelous. He was unsure if hunting the rude was enough of a reason for him to kill a person but he would discuss it with his mate and find a compromise that worked for the two of them. After all, relationships only survived due to compromise. He would give up some of his morals and Hannibal would gain some of his.

They would meld together until they were one, one person in two bodies. While this idea would have filled him with fear in the past, he only found contentment at the moment and a hint of excitement about what the future would bring. He exchanged a kiss with his mate for the first time before they enjoyed the fruits of their labors, a scent of contentness filling the room, entwining their scents together, as it should be forever more.

Chapter End Notes

I hope y'all enjoyed the ride! I have plans to write a sequel but have gotten caught up in other projects lately. Let me know if you'd be interested in a series rewrite with canon and non-canon cases and how the bond between Hannibal and Will changes things.

End Notes

This work is complete and will update every Sunday until completion. I am playing around with writing a sequel but will wait what people think of book one before committing either way. Let me know what you think!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!